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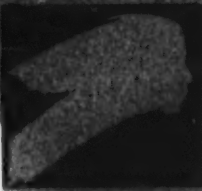
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ABSTRACT

Developed by the Women's NETWORK, a group representing women serving in state legislatures in the United States, this report examines how the private sector is involved in promoting learning readiness at the preschool level. The report begins with an introduction and a discussion of the importance of learning readiness as a national goal. The changing nature of private involvement in learning readiness is examined, and several programs sponsored by private sector employers are described, including programs developed by Honeywell, Kodak, American Bankers Insurance Group, and Texas Instruments. The report then describes several examples of states that are supporting learning readiness activities as well as school and business partnerships. Implications for state legislators are outlined in the concluding section of the report, which urges state legislators to sponsor programs that foster learning readiness and encourage private sector involvement in this area. (MM)

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A PUBLICATION OF THE NEEL WOMAN'S NETWORK, AFFILIATED WITH THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES

"GETTING ON BOARD: THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND LEARNING READINESS"

JULY 1992

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The Women's NETWORK of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) represents the women serving in state legislatures across the country. The mission of the NETWORK is to offer effectiveness and leadership training to women legislators so they can realize their full legislative potential. Realizing that women's issues are the responsibility of all legislators, it is the purpose of the NETWORK to develop and to influence public policy priorities for NCSL.

Chair: Representative Jo Ann Pottorff, Kansas
Executive Director: Sue Mullins

The National Conference of State Legislatures serves the legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories.

NCSL was created in January 1975 from the merger of three organizations that served or represented state legislatures. NCSL is a nonpartisan organization with three objectives:

- o To improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures;
- o To foster interstate communication and cooperation;
- o To ensure states a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system.

The Conference has offices in Denver, Colorado, and Washington, D.C.

President: Paul Bud Burke, President of the Senate, Kansas

Staff Chair: Terry Anderson, Director, Legislative Research Council, South Dakota

Executive Director: William T. Pound

GETTING ON BOARD

THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND LEARNING READINESS

by: Constance Koprowicz and John Myers

July, 1992

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The Women's NETWORK is a nonprofit member organization affiliated with the National Conference of State Legislatures. NETWORK's goals are threefold: to increase and strengthen women's leadership within NCSL; to increase and strengthen women's leadership within state legislatures; and to elevate issues of special concern to women through research, educational programming and sharing of policy options.

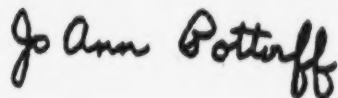
Research has shown that preparation for education does not begin with kindergarten but starts during the preschool years. The way a child grows and learns during the early years of life can have an enormous impact on his or her later development and school success. This preparation during the preschool years becomes a community effort including the business community as a partner in school readiness. Business involvement with education and the emerging involvement with preschool programs is one of the most hopeful developments in preparing children for education. Business is putting time and money where the greatest needs are in education. This growing corporate support represents a source of funding and personnel that the federal and state governments combined could never hope to equal.

One of the examples of a successful partnership is Success by 6, created by United Way of Minneapolis, which recognizes that the best investment in a child's later success in school is to make an early investment in that child. The program's goals are to improve public information policies and to develop programs that address the social, educational, health care, and emotional needs of children from the earliest stages of prenatal care to age six, when they enter school. The Success by 6 initiative has created a powerful coalition of advocates for children under age six in Minneapolis in which business leaders play a central role.

The theme of this NETWORK brief "Getting on Board The Private Sector and Learning Readiness" is completely within the traditional interests of women legislators. The policies involved in meeting the first of the national education goals reflect the holistic approach women bring to public policy development. The brief is intended to present information on states' initial success in involving the business community as a partner in school readiness.

NETWORK is grateful to the Ford Foundation for enabling this publication; to William Pound, NCSL executive director for his support; and to authors John Myers and Constance Koprowicz, NCSL's Education Program.

Copies of this publication are available free of charge to legislators and their staffs by calling the NCSL Marketing Department at 303/830-2054.



Jo Ann Pottorff, Chairperson
NCSL Women's NETWORK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
NARRATIVE: GETTING ON BOARD: THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND LEARNING READINESS	
I. Introduction: The Need for Intervention	1
II. Learning Readiness: A National Goal	4
III. The Changing Nature of Private Involvement in Learning Readiness	6
IV. Encouraging Private Activities: State Initiatives	10
V. Implications for State Legislators	13
Endnotes	14
ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION	
Bibliography	15

GETTING ON BOARD: THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND LEARNING READINESS

"When many children approach their first school experience, they are not ready to learn what most schools want them to learn."

"The term 'readiness' is commonly used to mean readiness to learn to read. However, children's ability to adapt to the school situation and its demands involves more aspects of their development than the knowledge and skills involved in reading. Children's general social development and intellectual backgrounds should also be taken into account when considering ways of helping children to prepare for experiences they are likely to encounter in school."

*Dr. Lilian G. Katz
"Readiness: Children and Their Schools"
The ERIC Review*

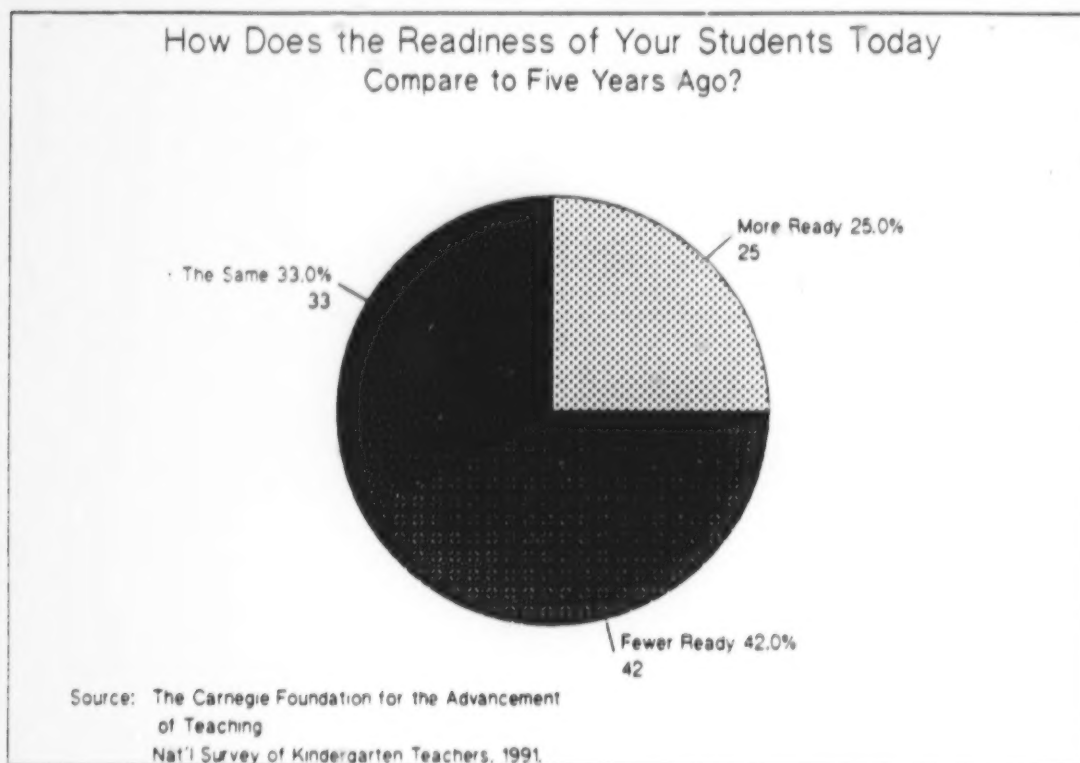
I. Introduction: The Need for Intervention

Preparing children to begin school has long been the family's responsibility. Until recently, families provided primary care for children until age five when they would generally enter kindergarten at the public school. Now, changes in home and society have led to dramatic changes in the lives of children, and preparing a child for school has become the responsibility not only of the family, but of government and the private sector.

Several trends since the 1960s have dramatically altered the pattern of school readiness. Children are entering school at younger ages than ever before, and private schools are helping to fill the increasing need for preschool services. In 1965, only three percent of children aged 3-5 were enrolled in a private nursery school compared to 17 percent in 1989. About 98 percent of children attend kindergarten, 14 percent of them in private schools.¹

As the number of single-parent families increases and more and more women enter the workforce, we see a rise in the number of preschool-aged children cared for outside the home, and a decrease in the time parents are able to spend with their children. Today, over six million children spend at least part of the day cared for by someone other than a relative. The quality of this care varies. And, evidence suggests, many children today are not prepared to enter kindergarten when they reach school age.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has recently emphasized learning readiness issues in their 1991 report, "Ready to Learn: A Mandate for the Nation." The report cites a survey in which kindergarten teachers expressed the belief that 35 percent of children entering school are not ready to learn. When asked to compare present students with those enrolled five years ago, 42 percent of teachers polled said children are less prepared for school now than before, while only 25 percent thought students' school readiness had improved. The wide publicity this report received has spurred a national dialogue on the learning readiness issue.



When children enter school unprepared for the appropriate level of learning, they do not easily catch up, often suffer from low self-esteem, and are more likely to drop out of school than a student who enjoys early success. In fact, statistics show that children who receive some form of pre-school education are 50 percent more likely to attend college and 50 percent more likely to become employed than those with no significant early learning experiences.²

This trend has become a concern of businesses as they seek to hire educated employees, only to find job applicants who lack basic skills and an adequate education. For

this reason, private sector involvement in education is increasing, and learning readiness is one area in which business leaders have chosen to become involved. Some companies have done this by contributing to community early childhood learning programs while others have created schools on company grounds for company employees in order to attract and retain the most talented members of the workforce. Whatever the approach, the impetus behind the action is both charitable and self-serving for businesses. Mutiu Fagbayi, director of Kodak's education program states, "Kodak is working with the schools and the community to produce students who can function productively in a diverse environment that will enhance the quality of life for all and at the same time achieve global economic competitiveness for Kodak."³

This brief will review this new private sector activity, examine some exemplary programs and describe state legislative activities that support increased private sector involvement in learning readiness.

II. Learning Readiness: A National Goal

The nation's governors and the President of the United States made school readiness a national concern when they agreed to the National Education Goals. The very first goal states that by the year 2000 all children in American will start school ready to learn. In this context, learning readiness is multi-dimensional, involving children's cognitive and general knowledge, physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional maturity, and approaches to learning and language usage.⁴ Objectives chosen by the National Education Goals Panel for learning readiness include the following:

- o All disadvantaged and disabled children will have access to high quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school.
- o Every parent in American will be a child's first teacher and devote time each day to helping his or her preschool child learn; parents will have access to the training and support they need.
- o Children will receive the nutrition and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, and the number of low-birthweight babies will be significantly reduced through enhanced prenatal systems.

Business leaders support this drive to prepare all youngsters for school. The Committee for Economic Development (CED), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization made up of business leaders and educators, first expressed concern over children's issues in a 1985 policy statement, *Investing in Our Children*. CED affirmed its interest in school readiness in *The Unfinished Agenda: A New Vision for Child Development and Education* (1991), with the following statement:

*"We believe that early childhood education should be available to all children who may not otherwise get adequate preparation for formal education from their families. States and local communities should make early childhood education a more integral part of the formal education process..."*⁵

In March, 1992, the National Education Goals panel adopted the "Resolution on Assessing Progress Toward Goal 1." They found that no single comprehensive measure

currently exists for evaluating learning readiness, and proposed the development of an Early Childhood Assessment System to provide more complete data. This entity would take on the following tasks:

- o Identifying the relationship between school readiness and educational achievement in the long term;
- o Collecting data on the nation's kindergarten students in regarding the five dimensions of learning readiness mentioned in the beginning of this section; and
- o Assessing the status of these children prior to their attendance in formal schooling and upon school entry.

As governors, policymakers and educators in each state express a commitment towards the national education goals, and toward achieving learning readiness for all students, methods of attaining the goals are sought. These leaders are calling on citizens from all sectors of society to be involved in reaching the goals. This is one reason that private sector participation in public education has been on the rise. With the help of business, government has been able to provide services to children despite budget shortfalls.

For more information on Goal 1, contact:

*Cynthia D. Prince, Ph.D
Senior Research Associate
National Education Goals Panel Staff
1850 M Street, NW, Suite 270
Washington, DC 20036
202/632-0952*

III. The Changing Nature of Private Involvement in Learning Readiness

Traditionally, private involvement in learning readiness has been through privately owned and operated early childhood learning centers or day care facilities. Recently, private sector employers have come on board by providing services on site to children of employees and by collaborating with the public schools to provide care for other youngsters in the community.

New Vistas (Honeywell): In September of 1990, the Honeywell corporate headquarters became home to a model program serving teen mothers and their children. Daycare and early childhood education services are provided to about 40 infants, toddlers and preschoolers. While the high school students receive an education and business exposure, their young children receive quality daycare, helping to ensure their readiness for school in years to come.

New Vistas is a collaborative effort conducted through the public school system. Minneapolis schools provide transportation, teachers and courses; Honeywell provides the space, equipment and cleaning services; the city provides child care workers; and IBM donated computers. Dr. James J. Renier, Honeywell CEO, initiated New Vistas. He was motivated by his work with the United Way of Minneapolis' "Success by 6" program, which brings businesses, government and non-profit organizations together to promote understanding of the importance of early childhood education and improve access to services.

For more information on New Vistas School contact:

*Kevin Whalen
Honeywell Inc.
Honeywell Plaza
Minneapolis, MN 55408
612/870-2701*

21st Century Learning Challenge (Kodak): Early childhood education is the first of four goals established for Kodak Companies in their 21st Century Learning Challenge. Getting kids ready for school is an important first step in achieving the project's other goals of enhancing math and science in K-12 education, supporting excellent instruction and

leadership in public schools, and working to strengthen the system as a whole. The company is committing about \$4.5 million this year to begin a 10-year effort targeting its Rochester, NY headquarters and Kingsport, TN facility.

For more information on 21st Century Learning Challenge, contact:

*Mutiu Fagbayi
Director, Education Programs
Manager, 21st Century Learning Challenge
Eastman Kodak Company
343 State Street
Rochester, NY 14650-0545
716/724-2785*

Satellite Learning Center (American Bankers Insurance Group): Satellite Learning Centers (SLC) are public schools run on the grounds of private companies. The first SLC was developed by the American Bankers Insurance Group (ABIG). Miami International Airport, Miami-Dade Community College and Honeywell, in Clearwater, developed similar centers after observing ABIG's success.

ABIG, which has provided child care and preschool services to its employees' children since 1984, built a facility in 1987 to provide kindergarten classes for those youngsters. Now, the school is one of Dade County's Satellite Learning Centers and serves students in kindergarten through second grade. Business leaders believe this service helps them retain quality employees who appreciate increased accessibility to the school and their children. Costs are shared by the company and Dade County Public Schools.

For more information on ABIG Satellite Learning Center, contact:

*Linda Vann
Director of Children's Services
American Bankers Insurance Group
11222 Quail Roost Drive
Miami, FL 33157
305/253-2244*

Corporate Community Schools of America,

Chicago: The Corporate Community Schools of America (C/CSA) is a non-profit organization founded by Joseph Kellman, president of Globe Glass & Mirror Company. C/CSA is sponsored by a group of corporations including McDonald's, Sears Roebuck, and United Airlines to name a few. Its mission is twofold. First, it seeks to test techniques and programs to improve inner-city education. Second, it serves as a catalyst for change in public education by sharing its experiences with educators, government officials and community leaders.

"As a businessman, I became convinced that true corporate social responsibility means putting corporate NAMEPOWER and corporate BRAINPOWER on the line in solving the inner-city education crisis." Joseph Kellman, President, Globe Glass & Mirror Co.

The first corporate/community school opened in September, 1988 in Chicago's North Lawndale, a poverty stricken community. The school serves children ages 2 through 13 and is tuition-free. The school's board of directors illustrates the collaborative nature of this endeavor; it includes executives from seven of the sponsoring companies, four educators and four community residents.

Efforts in preparing children for school are successful here. Children attending the corporate/community school at preschool age show progress far exceeding citywide averages. According to a C/CSA Fact Sheet, "They have attained grade-level performance or better on standard achievement math, vocabulary and reading tests at double the rate of most Chicago public school students."

For more information in Corporate/Community Schools of America, contact:

*Primus J. Mootry
Project Director
Corporate/Community Schools of America
Suite 1725, 407 South Dearborn
Chicago, IL 60605
312/427-0468*

Margaret H. Cone Center (Texas Instruments): Most of the Head Start programs in the country are run by private not-for-profit organizations. The Margaret H. Cone Center in South Dallas is an example of how early learning programs can use both federal and

in South Dallas is an example of how early learning programs can use both federal and private funding. The Head Start of Greater Dallas administers this program which runs on federal Head Start money and a \$300,000 grant from Texas Instruments.

The Margaret H. Cone Center is a model preschool program which supplements Head Start by providing additional services for children. It is a full-day, year-round program that provides education as well as health, dental and social services to the youngsters enrolled.

For more information on the Margaret H. Cone Center, contact:

*LueAlma Sumlin
Site Coordinator
Margaret H. Cone Center
4716 Hatcher
Dallas, TX 75210
214/421-5189*

IV. Encouraging Private Activities: State Examples

States are supporting activities in the areas of learning readiness and school/business partnerships. In some cases, legislation encourages partnerships in support of early childhood programs, while in others the two are not joined in statute. Examples of the latter are still valuable, as they can be tailored to fit the preschool needs of young children in any state.

Connecticut: State legislators in Connecticut authorized a program called "1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Kids Count" that is supported by foundation grants. The campaign was included in the legislation that authorized the Connecticut Commission on Children. It is an effort in which the government, the community and the private sector are working to serve children from birth to age five. Here, the private sector is championing the early childhood cause and developing draft legislation supporting services for young children. According to a Committee on Economic Development summary, "The Business Advisory Committee will provide a strong advocacy voice for early childhood issues and will design a cost-benefit analysis of early childhood programs for the state."

After gathering data on current services available for young children in Connecticut, the project worked to develop model legislation supporting needed early childhood services. During the 1992 legislative session, lawmakers passed a number of bills recommended by the campaign. For example, new laws were passed to maximize the use of federal dollars for programs for young children and their families; increase the quality of head start programs; and expand the length of kindergarten classes.

Additionally, the Connecticut Commission on Children has recently embarked upon the 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Kids Count School Readiness Media Campaign. This project aims to develop a working definition of "school readiness" and a blueprint for action for parents, business leaders and policymakers.

For more information on Kids Count, contact:

*Nancy S. Scomers
Public Policy Liaison
Connecticut General Assembly
Commission on Children
450 Broad Street
Hartford, CT 06106-1401
203/566-1338*

Florida: Private sector involvement in Florida's education system has more than doubled in the last five years as a result of the Florida Private Sector and Education Partnership Act of 1987. Through this Act, the legislature seeks to "enhance existing cooperation between the private sector and education entities and to facilitate the expansion and development of new partnership activities." While this legislation primarily targets initiatives for K-12 education, it serves as an example of how state legislation can support such activities at any level.

"The Legislature recognizes that the public school system would be strengthened by a closer cooperation between the private sector and the schools....Further, local communities with strong support from the business community have better educational systems contributing to a better quality of life, greater community stability, and a healthier economic climate. It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to enhance existing cooperation between the private sector and education entities and to facilitate the expansion and development of new partnership activities." Florida Private Sector and Education Partnerships Act.

Additionally, in 1990 Florida legislators approved tax exemptions for private companies that formed Satellite Learning Centers.

For more information, contact:

*Mary Grace Gordon
Business Partnership Coordinator
Florida Department of Education
126 Florida Education Center
Tallahassee, FL 32399
904/488-8385*

South Carolina: South Carolina's two major reform initiatives, the Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984 and its follow-up Target 2000, included provisions for improving services that lead to learning readiness. Also, the EIA called for increased private sector involvement in school reform, mandating the creation of school/business partnerships. In the years immediately following the law's passage, the number of businesses contributing to education initiatives increased 300 percent.

The private sector played a key role in the development of reform legislation in South Carolina. A task force of business, education and government leaders developed the Target 2000 reform package which included provisions for learning readiness as summarized below:

- o Expand the early childhood development program for at-risk four year olds by requiring that programs be offered in all school districts.**
- o Provide parenting classes, adult education and seminars to families with children from birth to age five to support parents in their role as the principal teachers of their preschool children. This program is to be expanded statewide over five years.**

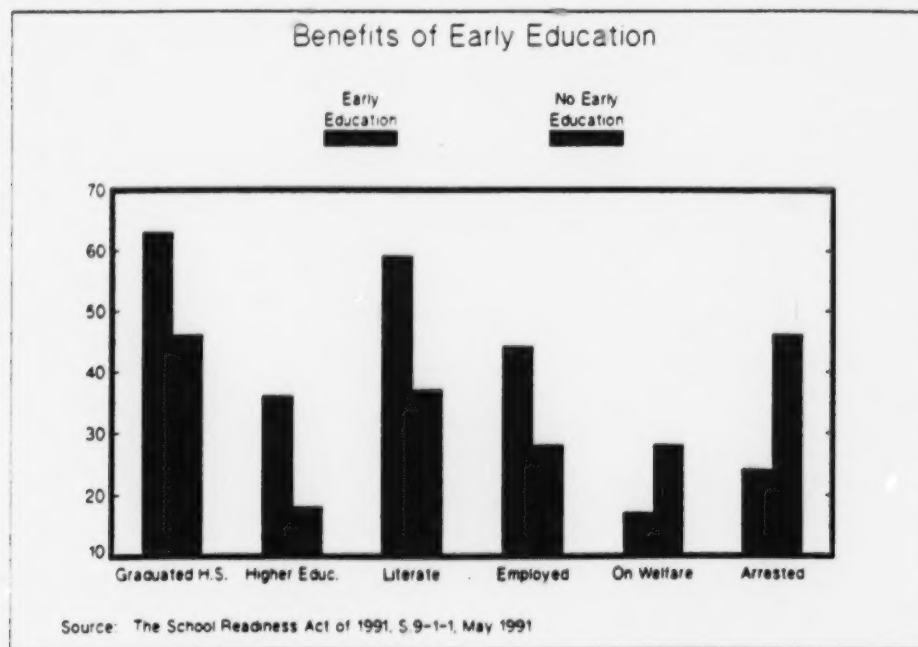
For more information on S.C. school/business partnerships, contact:

*Camille Nairn
Education Associate for Business/Education Partnerships
State Department of Education
1006 Rutledge Building, 1429 Senate Street
Columbia, SC 29201
803/734-8445*

*Ellen Hayden
Vice President for Education
South Carolina Chamber of Commerce
1201 Main Street, Suite 1810
Columbia, SC 29201
803/799-4601*

V. Conclusion: Implications for State Legislators

Early childhood education, especially for at-risk children, is becoming a priority in many states. Policymakers are showing increasing interest in the learning readiness issue partly due to its long-term economic implications. Statistics show that for every \$1 spent on preschool services for disadvantaged youth, as much as \$6 is saved in future expenditures in areas such as welfare, teen pregnancy, and crime.⁶



State legislators can create policies to create programs that foster learning readiness and can encourage private sector leaders to help strengthen and sustain these initiatives. Businesses and foundations can contribute to preschool programs financially or through the donation of computers, supplies, classroom space, or employee volunteer hours. Policymakers can encourage this involvement with enabling legislation or by inviting business and foundation leaders to serve on planning commissions or task forces.

Whatever method is used to create early childhood programs, the need is certain. When government and the private sector join forces to prepare all children for school, everyone benefits.

Endnotes

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4. "Resolutions of the National Education Goals Panel: Assessing Progress on Goal 1," National Education Goals Panel, Washington, D.C., March, 1992.
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